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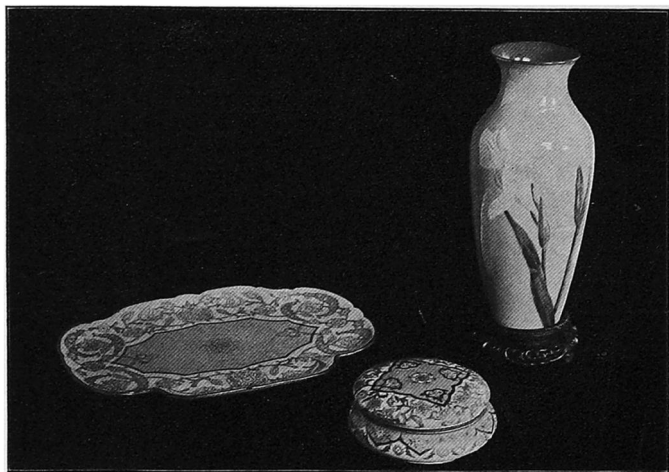
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DECORATED BY MRS. J. E. ZEUBLIN

THE ATLAN CERAMIC ART CLUB OF CHICAGO

As the Atlan Ceramic Art Club is an unique organization rapidly making a prominent place for itself among art clubs, a short article with a few photographs of work shown at the annual exhibition may prove of interest to all lovers of fine ceramics who appreciate the fact that this small club is placing ceramic work where other artists and art critics will recognize and appreciate it also.

The club members understand that they are only making a beginning—studying the A, B, C's in fact—but those who saw last year's exhibit must acknowledge that a year of faithful study and work made at least a good start down the alphabet, with prospects bright for a finer exhibit this year.

It is not easy. Chicago is the Mecca for many teachers from all parts of the country, who, ignorant of the fact that there is an advance in this work, still wish to pursue their studies in floral decoration only. It follows that the little leaven of the club work raises but slowly the standard outside of the city.

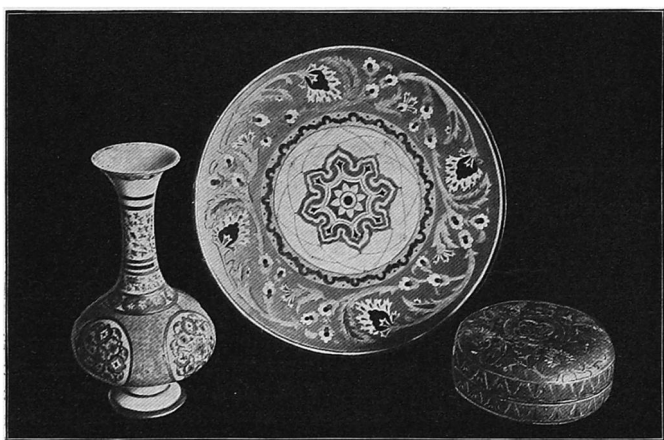
In Chicago it is not so, and the club members who are teachers, are gratified by an increased interest among their pupils in the beautiful conventional work so dear to these teachers' hearts.

There is something fascinating about this conventional work, for after a student once puts her brush to it, and seriously begins the

study of antique ceramics, she instinctively feels that she is now on the right and only road to lasting and successful work.

The Atlan Club rules are perhaps more severe and strict than those of other art clubs, but when one remembers that it was organized for the sole purpose of study and progress, and that the club is limited to a small number, rules compelling every member to do the best that lies within her each year in order that the annual exhibition may show marked progress, are necessary, and vindicate the wisdom of the club in the framing of its constitution.

The club has been called exclusive. It has been said that new



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members are not welcome. An applicant, who is a conscientious worker and anxious to pursue the line of study that the club has decided upon, is heartily welcomed whenever there is a vacancy. Lacking interest in this work, she would not find herself in harmony with the aims and aspirations of the other members.

The course of study planned for each winter requires steady, severe work. Many social, and some financial plans are cheerfully thrown aside that the study course may not be infringed upon, and only those who are in earnest would be willing to make the sacrifice.

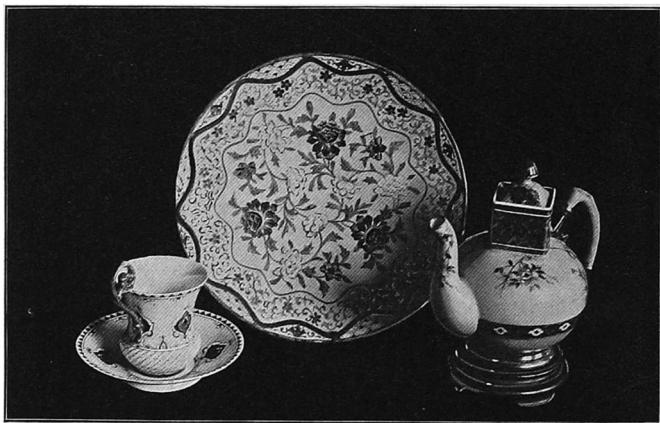
The Atlan Club was organized in the early spring of 1893, and though the time was short it made a most creditable exhibition in the Woman's Building at the World's Fair. Eight of its members had cabinets of individual work there; seven of them won medals and

diplomas, as indeed did nearly every member who exhibited with the club proper.

In the fall of 1893 a reception and exhibition was held at the residence of one of its members. Since then the club has held an annual exhibition in November at the Art Institute. This exhibition, opening with a large reception, and continuing for two weeks, has grown to be a most popular social event.

Owing in a great measure to the kindness and interest of the Art Institute Executive Board the club has had the courage to work unceasingly for the uplifting and progress of its chosen art.

Those who have exhibited in large clubs only know nothing of



MRS. E. L. HUMPHREY MRS. E. L. HUMPHREY MRS. F. M. SESSIONS

the responsibility weighing upon each member when she realizes at the close of one exhibition, that in twelve short months the club must place another and better one, consisting of new work.

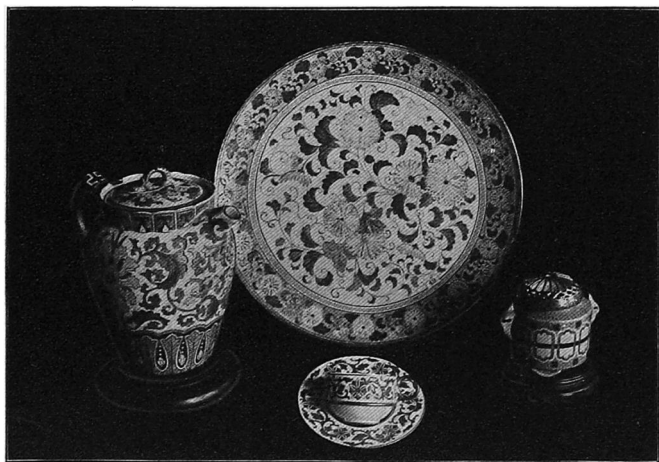
No work can be exhibited a second time at these annual Art Institute exhibitions. Every member must send in at least three, or, if small, six pieces, and as those alone would make a small exhibit, all try to accomplish more, with the result that never less than one hundred, and usually nearer two hundred pieces are placed in the cases for the opening day. It is rumored that this year the judges will be more severe than ever, so that the exhibition must make up in quality what it may lack in quantity.

In fact, however, each member is her own most severe judge. Several members last year resolutely refused to place work that had

already passed the judges, simply because the colors and designs clashed with others in the same case, thus destroying the harmony of the whole. Only by such loyalty to the club's highest interests, to the exclusion of personal feeling, can progress be made. Eliminate personal feeling, work for the club's advancement and interest, and success is assured.

Unfortunately color photography has not yet reached the point where it could be utilized in taking pictures of the china exhibited last year, for the color schemes made the beauty of many pieces.

The motifs were taken in many cases from books on rare ceramics,



MARY A. PHILLIPS

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or from sketches of treasures in foreign art museums, adapted to the china the artist wished to decorate, and in nearly every case the colors were their own, and the harmony and artistic conceptions, combined with correct drawing and perfect and most beautiful enamels, made many pieces equal to the originals from which were drawn their inspirations.

However, these photographs will give some idea of the present work of the club, and the writer is only sorry that more members could not be represented, but they or their work were beyond reach, and these poor examples must serve to illustrate this article.

In 1896 the club took a course of lessons in design from a competent and delightful teacher, and again in 1897. but feeling that ceramics pure and simple was what they needed, the next year they

arranged to study under Mrs. Florence Koehler, who had for years made a most thorough and exhaustive study of Oriental pottery. At once they knew that they had made a wise choice. As soon as the rush of holiday work was over, in January, 1898, they began the systematic study of antique ceramics under her inspiring leadership, dividing into small classes for the technical training, but meeting in a body once a week, for what they called a criticism lesson.

This was continued for two months only, when Mrs. Koehler's departure for Europe obliged the club to work out its own salvation in order to be ready for the November exhibition. That they had



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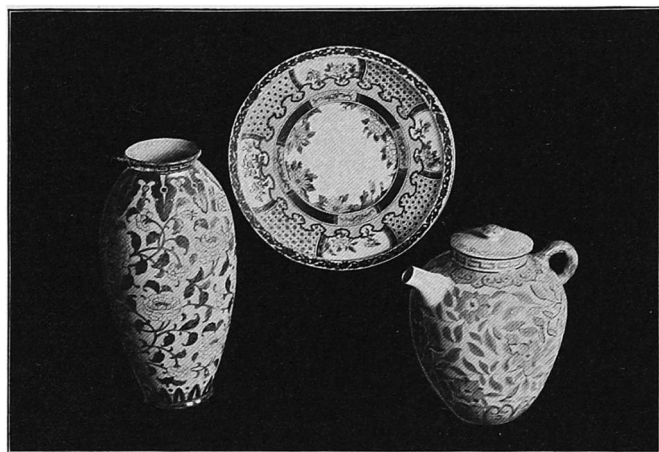
HELEN M. TOPPING

profited by Mrs. Koehler's two months' instruction was very apparent. Again this January they resumed the study, expecting to continue it until summer.

The class lessons are conducted similar to any other, only limited to five members in each class. Little of the actual painting is done in class. Testing color schemes, discussing designs, studying shapes of ware, and perhaps criticising work brought in by members, usually constitutes the class lessons. The general meeting, however, which is held only once a month this year, is a time of joyous excitement. All members try to be present. To be absent is a great affliction. Each comes with a piece of china designed, sketched, and colored either in water colors or mineral paints, to be viewed by the entire club, while the instructor criticises, praises, or advises. And with

what tact she does it! Nearly always she finds something to praise, even when obliged to condemn. How they watch the lighting up of her face as, unwrapping a piece of china, she sees the mark of a real inspiration, with which often she is more genuinely pleased than the originator herself.

Always one or more has had a real inspiration, and when some exquisite design or perfect color scheme is held up to view, the sincere praise of teacher and students well repays the fortunate one for the hours of study and thought she has spent on it. The club is generous and quick to acknowledge a stroke of genius, for that



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is what it often is. The request that each member shall bring a large plaque with a Persian design, the next month, results in a most bewildering array of utterly different plaques. Perhaps upon close inspection the same motif has been used more than once. The plaques are repeating no design, however. All members, it is true, have access to the same books of reference, all carefully use only motifs suitable for ceramic work, but the individuality of each, nevertheless, is plainly stamped on her own plaque.

As the club studies more deeply into the mysteries of ceramics, more originality is expected by Mrs. Koehler, and so far the members are responding nobly.

The enamel work in low relief has well-nigh reached perfection, and would rank with and even above much of the ceramic work so carefully treasured in the museums of the old world, and each month

shows marked progress among the students. In fact, the Atlan Ceramic Art Club is ready, and deserves to stand at the head of all ceramic clubs, the pioneer of an art long ago acknowledged as an art in foreign lands, and now taking its proper place in the art history of this country.

The present officers of the club, elected last year, are: President, Mrs. E. L. Humphrey; Vice-President, Mrs. F. M. Steele; Secretary, Miss E. E. Adams; Treasurer, Miss M. A. Phillips; Councilors, Mrs. J. E. Zeublin, Mrs. A. A. Frazee, Miss M. Yeoman.

The rules of the club allow members to hold office for two consecutive years only.

MABEL C. DIBBLE.



BOSTON NOTES

With the Sargent, the de Monvel, the Meakin, the Davis, and some minor exhibits this month, there has been no lack of interesting work to study. The first of these in importance is the Sargent exhibition. It was essentially a social affair, and though it has drawn students from all around, it has been a fad of society as well. I myself do not consider the combination of afternoon tea and art as flattering to the latter; nor is the fact that the notice that some noted actress or society woman will pour the tea draws thousands a sign of great appreciation of Sargent's work.

So great is Sargent that it seems like treason to suggest even very humbly that he is not perfect in every respect, yet it seems to me that the impression one carries away from a collection of paintings should be something more than that of cleverness. Sargent's textures are wonderful. There is nothing to equal them that I have ever seen, in this country or abroad. His brush play, his technique, his color, his poses and the expression his portraits show are all as fine as could be, and his portraits stand out from their backgrounds in a manner that is almost startling. They seem ready to speak and move.

The cleverest portrait in the exhibition, to my mind, is the Wertheimer. This is the very man himself, with all his worldly doubt of everything ideal, and if Sargent had never painted another portrait this would immortalize him. Hung next it is one to bring into prominence all that the nature of the former subject lacked. This is a portrait of the Hon. Laura Lester, an ideal child face. She wears a black satin gown, and the sweet, childish face is a great contrast to its neighbor. The eyes are painted to show the wondering, questioning child-look, and these two portraits show all Sargent's great genius without a flaw.

To notice, in the most cursory fashion, the many portraits and